

§ 900.173 Is the recommended decision always final?

No. Any party to the appeal may file precise and specific written objections to the recommended decision, or any other comments, within 15 days of receiving the recommended decision. You shall serve a copy of your objections on the other party. The recommended decision will become final 15 days after the Indian tribe or tribal organization receives the ALJ's recommended decision, unless a written statement of objections is filed with the Secretary of Health and Human Services or the IBIA during the 15-day period. If no party files a written statement of objections within 15 days, the recommended decision will become final.

§ 900.174 If an Indian tribe or tribal organization objects to the recommended decision, what will the Secretary of Health and Human Services or the IBIA do?

(a) The Secretary or the IBIA has 15 days from the date he/she receives timely written objections to modify, adopt, or reverse the recommended decision. If the Secretary or the IBIA does not modify or reverse the recommended decision during that time, the recommended decision automatically becomes final.

(b) When reviewing the recommended decision, the IBIA or the Secretary may consider and decide all issues properly raised by any party to the appeal, based on the record.

(c) The decision of the Secretary or of the IBIA shall:

- (1) Be in writing;
- (2) Specify the findings of fact or conclusions of law which are modified or reversed;
- (3) Give reasons for the decision, based on the record; and
- (4) State that the decision is final for the Department.

§ 900.175 Will an appeal hurt an Indian tribe or tribal organization's position in other contract negotiations?

No. A pending appeal will not affect or prevent the negotiation or award of another contract.

§ 900.176 Will the decisions on appeals be available for the public to review?

Yes. The Secretary shall publish all final decisions from the ALJs, the IBIA, and the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

APPLICABILITY OF THE EQUAL ACCESS TO JUSTICE ACT**§ 900.177 Does the Equal Access to Justice Act (EAJA) apply to appeals under this subpart?**

Yes. EAJA claims against the DOI or the DHHS will be heard by the IBIA under 43 CFR 4.601-4.619. For DHHS, appeals from the EAJA award will be according to 25 CFR 900.165(b).

Subpart M—Federal Tort Claims Act Coverage General Provisions**§ 900.180 What does this subpart cover?**

This subpart explains the applicability of the Federal Tort Claims Act (FTCA). This section covers:

- (a) Coverage of claims arising out of the performance of medical-related functions under self-determination contracts;
- (b) Coverage of claims arising out of the performance of non-medical-related functions under self-determination contracts; and
- (c) Procedures for filing claims under FTCA.

§ 900.181 What definitions apply to this subpart?

Indian contractor means:

(1) In California, subcontractors of the California Rural Indian Health Board, Inc. or, subject to approval of the IHS Director after consultation with the DHHS Office of General Counsel, subcontractors of an Indian tribe or tribal organization which are:

- (i) Governed by Indians eligible to receive services from the Indian Health Service;
- (ii) Which carry out comprehensive IHS service programs within geographically defined service areas; and
- (iii) Which are selected and identified through tribal resolution as the local provider of Indian health care services.